

Biography vol 8

ANECDOTES

OF

RICHARD BROTHERS,

IN THE YEARS 1791 AND 1792,

WITH SOME

THOUGHTS UPON CREDULITY,

OCCASIONED BY THE

TESTIMONY OF N. B. HALHED, ESQ.

OF THE

AUTHENTICITY OF HIS PROPHECIES.

Ingenium Exemplorum parvi imitatores.

BY JOSEPH MOSER,

AUTHOR OF TURKISH TALES, TIMOTHY TWIG, &c. &c.

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1795.



ANECDOTES

OF

RICHARD BROTHERS.

“ALL Prophecies, (says a gentleman who has favoured the world with the addition of his Testimony to some that were in circulation, of the authenticity of those of Richard Brothers) are neither more nor less than *true* and genuine ænigmas, in which the meaning is so nicely inveloped by ambiguity of sense and of expression, that until we be furnished by the *inventor* himself with the proper clue to unravel them, they are calculated to appear as a tissue of the most incongruent absurdities.”

Such is the opinion of a writer who has suffered his respectable name to give celebrity

brity to the dreams of a madman; for in that light, every person who has been acquainted with him has long considered Mr. Brothers; and as it seems next to impossible for a man of the abilities of the author of the Testimony to behold him in any other, so I should think it equally impossible for any one that is not as insane as himself, to adopt as truth the ridiculous flights of his enthusiasm. I am led to believe the pamphlet in question to be a political one; that the author intends by it to convey sentiments, which the members of the House of Commons have to lament that he had no opportunity of exhibiting to them, and that he has chosen poor Brothers as the medium, from its singularity, the most likely to attract the attention of the public.

From the time of the oracles of Greece, whose characteristics were *ambiguity*, *obscurity*, and *convertibility*, public credulity has been ever considered by artful men as an excellent political engine. In the Grecian history we have more than once seen that the Delphian priestess suffered herself to be corrupted with presents

presents. It would lead me too far from the design of these few pages, to shew of how much consequence the politicians of those days thought the influence of so powerful an engine ; but it may be necessary to observe, that it was generally called to the aid of the party who wished, either from motives of *interest* or *ambition* to *change the form of government*.

We know that the strongest hold which has been taken of the human mind has been that of credulity. To that, we know, was owing the influence of the oracles ; an influence so powerful as to resist conviction, notwithstanding their frauds and impostures were so frequently discovered.

We have read, that under the influence of credulity, fathers and mothers, amongst the *Carthaginians*, have given up their children, depopulated their cities, and destroyed the most florid of their youth, in obedience to the bloody dictates of those instruments.

After the oracles had ceased upon the promulgation of Christianity, artful and designing men, well acquainted with the credit
which

which the great Prophets, such as *Samuel, David, Daniel, Nathan, &c.* who were chosen persons inspired by God to instruct the Jews, had obtained, appeared in divers parts of the world, in the different shapes of preachers or predictors, whose designs were either to counteract the progress, of Christianity, *change the form of government*, or extort money from the public. The success with which their machinations was attended through the *dark ages*, during the *crusades*, and down to the present period is too obvious to need recapitulation. In all times of public distress, a Prophet has arisen, and the Scripture Prophecies have been perverted, and converted to party purposes, either to serve the interested views of individuals, to give energy to armies, in defence of their country, or stimulate the people to wreck their vengeance upon particular states.

Whether the shining cross, which is said to have appeared to the army of Constantine, with the Greek inscription around it signifying *Conquer in this sign*, was real or an illusion it is not very material to enquire, as it is only mentioned

mentioned to shew the effect it had upon the soldiers, which was that of inspiring them with a confidence of success, that rendered them invulnerable. The apparition in the wood of Mans that crossed Charles the VIth of France, on his way; and uttered these words---*stop, king, you are betrayed!* has been judged a contrivance to drive from his throne a monarch whom, perhaps some persons thought, had reigned too long.

The supernatural mission of the Maid of Orleans, as it was at that time believed, was a political engine of the greatest use to the French, as it inspired the army of the Dauphin, while it weakened that of the English, and powerfully operated with other causes to make the latter relinquish all their conquests in France.

In our country the same means have been frequently used, and those who wished to disturb, or impede government, or dethrone the monarch; have, from the time of *Peter of Pomfret*, whose fate I hope no modern
Prophet

Prophet will meet, whenever they have found a person, in whose composition insanity and enthusiasm combined to make him a proper object---drawn him forth, and, through his medium, promulgated their opinions, in which they were sure to be joined by a large portion of the disaffected and credulous, which every nation produces.

But of all the times in which hypocrisy triumphed, in which the passions of the people were perverted to the worst of purposes, none that this country has presented to our view, in the historic page, can equal those that were a little antecedent, and that immediately succeeded the Murder of Charles the First. When the reign of fanaticism commenced, every week produced a new religion, every day a new prophet.

It will be scarcely necessary to mention more than the names of these enthusiasts, as their actions, and the consequences of those actions, are well known. The fifth monarchy men, who imagined the time of the Millennium,

Millennium, or the reign of JESUS CHRIST upon earth, was come, and who afterwards, under the conduct of Venner,* made an insurrection, in which some lives were lost, were the most conspicuous, as they continued their extravagancies, and suffered for them in the reign of Charles the Second, 1660--1 : But to return to the protectorate, under whose auspices arose *Praise God Barebone, a leather-seller*, who, like our modern Prophet, while he was an instrument in the hands of an artful man, was followed by a large party, and even formed what was called *his* parliament.

To him succeeded a host of men, who pretended to superior sanctity and divine inspiration, such as *Bidle, Cops, Fry, Erburgh, Saltmarsh*, &c. at whose head was to be found *James Naylor*, who, from his likeness to the pictures of our Saviour, was led by enthusiasm, which, at length arose to madness, to personate him, riding into Bristol in triumph, his Disciples strewing his way with the branches and leaves of trees, &c. affecting his Divinity, *as that he could raise the dead, heal the sick, and fast forty days.*

B

Such

* Who had been Oliver Cromwell's porter.

Such were the effects of enthusiasm in the last century. In the present, several attempts have been made upon the credulity of the people, first in 1705,* “ When a company of French “ Prophets came over, and miserably infect- “ ed many crack-brained and frantic persons “ in London, who fancied they had revela- “ tions of things to come. They had nu- “ merous meetings about the skirts of the “ city; nor did they spare even sacred “ things: there you might see the Prophet “ laying down, as if expiring, or else, like “ one out of his mind, he is mute, sweats, “ trembles, at length begins to rave, foam- “ ing at the mouth---sometimes he opens it “ wide, repeating the names of *Assyrian* and “ *Egyptian* kings. About this time women “ began to prophecy. Some of them pre- “ tended that they could raise the dead, and “ appointed a time for restoring *Dr. Wells* “ to life:---vast numbers of people crowded “ to the place, where they waited for the “ expected miracle, till their credulity be- “ came a jest.” These Prophets, after pro- ceeding to Scotland, where they found the northern air *too sharp* for them, transported themselves

* Cunningham’s History of Great Britain.

themselves into Holland, where the magistrates immediately committed them to prison as *rogues* and *vagabonds*.

The next attack upon the credulity of the public in this century, was the affair of the *Rabbit Woman*; to her succeeded the *Life Guard Man*, who was, for the time he reigned, a Prophet of considerable eminence, and though made use of rather as an instrument of mirth than politics, the unequivocal proof which the people gave of their belief of his assertions, and their dread of his denunciations, which caused them to collect their valuables, abandon their homes, and with their children retire to the fields, there to pass the night in which his dreadful predictions were to be accomplished, are sufficient to shew the effects, which any person, who was inclined to establish or overturn any system might produce, by raising such an bullition in the public mind.

Although the Cock-lane Ghost was considered up as an instrument of private malice, the number of persons, of all ages, professions, and situations in life, that believed, or affected to believe, the predictions of

Fanny, interpreted as they were from her *knocking* and *scratching*, is another instance that may be added to the many I have adduced, to shew that a Prophet seldom appears or a Ghost is seldom called from the grave but for some political vindictive or sinister purposes.

Whether Mr. Brothers is, unhappily, intended to be made an instrument to effect any of these, it is impossible to say; but I can assert with confidence, that, from my own knowledge, he has been for some years suffering under a mental derangement, as a proof of which I shall intrude upon the patience of my readers the few pages of the following narrative.

Being, in the course of the year 1791, in the almost constant habit of attending the workhouse board of the united parishes of Saint Margaret and St. John the Evangelist Westminster, as a Governor of the Poor, the following circumstance occurred, which, I thought so interesting, that I wrote it down immediately, and shall give it as near to the manuscript

manuscript as possible, avoiding only some repetition, which arose from communicating with and addressing different persons upon the same subject.

Workhouse Board,
Thursday, Aug. 23, 1791.

Application having been made by a Mrs. Green, of Dartmouth-street, Westminster, respecting a gentleman, who, she said, had lodged in her house three years, and whom she described as a Lieutenant in the Navy, upon half pay, and of whose honesty, good temper, and moral conduct, she spoke in the most advantageous terms: but that from some scruples, which appeared to her to be owing to mental derangement, he had refused to apply to the agents, and take the oath required, in order to receive his pay. She further represented, that the arrears now due to him amounted to upwards of one hundred and thirty pounds; that he had suffered a large debt to accumulate, and as she, however willing, was, from poverty, unable to support him any longer, she desired to be informed what steps she must take in the affair. The Workhouse Board considering
 what

what she represented as a great hardship upon one party, and a great misfortune to the other, determined to receive him in the light of a casual pauper, and ordered him to be brought to the house.

Thursday, Sept. 1.

The person who lodged at Mrs. Green's having, in the course of the week, been brought into the house, was requested to attend the Board, in order to undergo the customary examination. I must confess his appearance prejudiced me greatly in his favour. He seemed about thirty years of age, tall and well formed, and in his address and manner much mildness and gentility.

He came into the room with his hat on, and said, that he hoped we would excuse him from taking it off, as he considered that kind of respect scarcely due to any mortal, and that it ought only to be paid to the *Almighty*.

When the necessary questions respecting his settlement were put to him, either the matter or the manner seemed to give him offence; however, upon being desired to take
a chair,

a chair, his serenity returned ; he took off his hat, and said, he knew when he was treated with that respect his character demanded. He was then asked the following questions, to which he returned the answers annexed to them.

Q. ‘ Pray, sir, do you know the reason of
‘ your being brought to this house ?

A. ‘ Indeed, I do not ! All that I know
‘ of the matter is, that I was brought in
‘ a very rough manner ; but as external ob-
‘ jects affect me but little, I acquiesce.

Q. ‘ I think, sir, you are in his Majesty’s
‘ service ?

A. ‘ You are mistaken. I resigned two
‘ years since. I am in the service of a Prince,
‘ the greatest and most potent---a Prince, in
‘ whose service my wages will be certain ;
‘ but his kingdom is not of this world.

Q. ‘ What, sir, was your reason for resign-
‘ ing your commission ?

A. ‘ Disgust ! I conceived the military
‘ life to be totally repugnant to the duties of
‘ Christianity ; and that I could not *consci-*
‘ *enciously* receive the wages of *Plunder*,
‘ *Bloodshed*, and *Murder* !

Q. ‘ How

Q. ' How did you imagine you could live
' without your pay, and that pay, which,
' from your character and appearance, we
' should suppose, was earned with honour to
' yourself, and advantage to your country ?

A. ' Therefore I reject it ! I observed
' before, it was impossible for a military man
' to take his pay with a safe conscience ! As
' to my future support, I trust the master
' whom I serve will not suffer me to want.
' I shall, in a few days, receive a sum more
' than sufficient to pay this poor woman's
' debt ten times over.

Q. ' Pray, sir, have you ever been a
house-keeper ?

A. ' I cannot absolutely say I have not :
' I once agreed for a house, and was two
' months in possession ; but as a very melan-
' choly idea comes across my mind when I
' think of that period, I hope you will not
' press me further upon the subject.

Q. ' Certainly we shall not. We under-
' stand, sir, that you was born in *America* ?

A. ' I was, in the town of *Placentia*, in
' Newfoundland : I have not a friend or re-
' lation in this part of the world.

Q. ' Where

Q. ' Where did you lodge before you came to Westminster ?

A. ' In Bridewell Precinct.

Q. ' You will excuse us, fir, we mean it not as an impertinent, but a necessary question : What rent did you pay weekly ?

A. ' I am above that false pride which shrinks from enquiry ; I will answer any question you please to put to me : I have always endeavoured to live within the bounds of my income, narrow as they were ; but you may suppose, that, out of nominally three shillings, but really two and ten-pence per day, I could not afford very superb lodgings : in fact, I paid half a crown a week for my room.'

We are, fir, obliged to you for your communication, and shall not trouble you further at present.

As this gentleman was reported to be insane, it struck me at the time, that it seemed a very methodical kind of madness ; and, indeed, it had the same effect upon the gentlemen at the Board. I must observe that, by the favour of the officers, he was suffered to

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have

have a small room to himself, which he furnished with his sea cot, portmanteau, earthen ware, &c. and what gave me great pleasure, he arranged his domestic matters with a neatness and *proprete*, which it would have been well if the poor around him had imitated.

As I saw him frequently at that time, it was impossible that marks of derangement could escape my notice ; for, notwithstanding a promptness of reply, and an apparent shrewdness and sagacity, there was a string, which, if touched upon, produced discord of mind : this was no other than subjects of religion and controversy, upon which his ideas wandered into all the vagaries of wildness and enthusiasm.

These observations were corroborated by a subsequent examination of his landlady, Mrs. Green, who said, that during the last eight months, that Mr. Brothers had lodged in her house, he had been guilty of many extravagancies in his behaviour ; such as burning many valuable books, breaking his sword, &c.

That

That he used frequently to inform her, that a lady was coming to visit him, and desired her to have her tea equipage in readiness; he has then dressed himself, and after that carried up water and scoured the garret.

As this operation had deranged his cloaths, he has dressed again, and watched with the casement open till it was dark. When asked by his landlady if he expected that the lady would fly in at the window? he answered, that these were mysteries above her comprehension. Soon after this he was employed some time in writing, and made up a packet of letters; he then went out, to the surprize of Mrs. Green, as he had not been in the street for many months before.

It appeared that he threw the letters into a coach, in which there was a lady of fashion. Her brother, a Colonel in the Guards, called in Dartmouth-street, to enquire after the author, who was absent eight days; and when he returned, was so scratched, bruised, and emaciated, as greatly to excite the compassion of his landlady.

As the foregoing testimony of Mrs. G. seemed to convey a pretty strong idea of in-

sanity, with respect to the object of it; the gentlemen at the board were of opinion the application should be made, either to the Admiralty or to some individual acquainted with the mode of proceeding, in similar cases. A task which I cheerfully undertook, and upon mentioning the situation of the Lieutenant to a gentleman of great respectability and benevolence, he did me the favour to write to the Navy Office; where I learned that Mr. Brothers was well known, he having frequently sent letters to the commissioners, &c.

From the gentleman to whom I made application at that place, I was informed that the account the Lieutenant gave of himself was correct, except in one instance. He had been an officer on board the *St. Albans*, a 64 gun ship; that he was paid off in the year 1783, since which time he has been upon half pay, but that he was mistaken as to his resignation, as, whatever his idea of the matter might be, his name still continued on the books, and by them it appeared, he had two years pay nearly due. When I had mentioned the unfortunate situation of his mind, which had taken a turn, that made it a point of conscience

ence with him to preclude himself from the possession of money, that was absolutely necessary to render his existence comfortable I asked the gentleman's advice as to the method of proceeding. He said that the Lords of the Admiralty upon a proper application to them would dispense with the Affidavit, and suffer his pay to be received in trust for him, his agents were of the same opinion, in consequence of which, the board desired the favour of the medical gentlemen who attend the Workhouse to examine him.

One of these gentlemen having had frequent opportunities of seeing Mr. Brothers, had no doubt of his insanity, of which indeed in his conversation he gave very frequent proofs. The other who had never seen him before, entered into a long and pointed examination, and from the answers he gave to some interesting questions in which he seemed to be guarded by the utmost shrewdness and caution, was induced to think that he was not at that time insane, for although his mind had apparently received a deep impression, and was strongly biased toward a particular object, such a religious propensity,

sity, even if sincere, could not with strict propriety be termed insanity, and it might by a man of his shrewdness, upon other subjects, be easily affected.

I must confess the force of these observations struck me, but at the same time I considered that if Mr. B. was acting the part of *Edgar*, it was next to impossible he could have continued the deception for such a length of time, as had been intimated. I therefore determined to enquire into his conduct, previous to his coming to Westminster. I found he had, by the people at whose houses he had lodged, been considered as a little deranged in his mind particularly his last landlord in Bridewell Precinct who informed me that he spent most of his time in reading books of controversy, and which I conclude has had the same effect upon his brain that romances and books of chivalry is feigned to have had upon that of Don Quixote.

In consequence of the information we had obtained, and the observations that had been made by those that were most in the habits of seeing Mr. B. a Petition and memorial was
presented

presented to the Lords, Commissioners of the Admiralty.

HUMBLY SHEWING,

“ That Mrs. Green, of Dartmouth-street,
 “ applied a short time since to the Work-
 “ house Board to take their directions
 “ respecting a lodger of hers, a Mr.
 “ Brothers, who it appeared by the account
 “ she gave at that time, and by a subsequent
 “ examination, had lived in her house three
 “ years, was a Lieutenant in the Navy upon
 “ the half pay list, and of whose general
 “ conduct she spoke in the most advantage-
 “ ous terms, but that from some opinions,
 “ which it was supposed he had imbibed,
 “ from much reading and a total seclusion
 “ from company, his mind has been, and
 “ seems to be deranged as he has in parti-
 “ cular manifested within the last eight
 “ months by many extravagancies, such as
 “ burning his books, breaking his sword,
 “ and various other acts which seem strongly
 “ tinctured with insanity.

“ Mrs. G. further represented that he
 “ owed her about thirty three pounds, and
 “ that

“ that being a poor woman, it was impossi-
 “ ble to keep him any longer, he being
 “ totally destitute of money, and that al-
 “ though she found upon enquiry a confi-
 “ derable sum was due to him from the
 “ Navy Pay Office, he positively refuses to
 “ receive it, or do those acts which might
 “ legally authorize any other person to receive
 “ it for him.

“ That the Workhouse Board touched with
 “ compassion for so uncommon a case of
 “ double distress, received this unfortunate
 “ Officer into their house, although he had
 “ gained no settlement either in these pa-
 “ rishes, nor, as they believe, in any other
 “ in England. He being born at *Placentia*,
 “ in *Newfoundland*, and having no friend or
 “ relation in this country. That under these
 “ circumstances, they cannot, consistent with
 “ their trust, continue to maintain him much
 “ longer at the public expence, and see no
 “ means by which this unfortunate gentle-
 “ man can be relieved from perdition, unless
 “ your Lordships will be pleased in your
 “ wisdom and humanity to dispense with the
 “ forms under which Officers in his situa-
 “ tion

" tion are entitled to receive their half-pay,
 " and to direct that the money that is, or
 " shall become due, be paid into the hands
 " of such persons as your Lordships shall
 " please to appoint, security being duly
 " given to apply it to the maintainance and
 " support of this unhappy gentleman for so
 " long as he shall continue in his present
 " state of intellectual infirmity."

" And your Petitioners, &c."

In consequence of the preceding petition,
 a gentleman at the Admiralty signified their
 Lordships' acquiescence in a letter to the
 board, of which the following is the sub-
 stance :

" GENTLEMEN,

" Having laid before the Lords, Commis-
 " sioners of the Admiralty, your memorial,
 " setting forth that in consideration of the
 " unfortunate state of mind of *Lieut. Bro-*
 " *thers*, of the Royal Navy, and his being desti-
 " tute of money and friends, the Work-
 " house Board of the parishes of St. Marga-
 " ret and St. John had received him into
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“ their house, and requesting that his half-
 “ pay may be paid for his benefit and sup-
 “ port, during his present state of intellec-
 “ tual infirmity, I have their lordships’ com-
 “ mands to acquaint you, that upon a similar
 “ representation of the deranged state of
 “ mind of *Mr. Brothers* from his agents,
 “ they have pleased to order that the Lieu-
 “ tenant’s affidavit be dispensed with, and the
 “ half-pay that shall appear to be due to him
 “ paid to such person as shall be authorized
 “ to receive it.”

“ I am, &c.”

Here the difficulties that had hitherto im-
 peded the settlement of Mr. B. seemed to
 have vanished, his agents received the pay,
 paid all the debts he had contracted, and fre-
 quently consulted with the parish officers and
 myself about taking him from the house, and
 placing him in a situation more adapted to his
 former habits of life ; but although his friends
 thought all difficulties had been overcome,
 that by no means appeared to be the case, as
 the person for whom we had interested our-
 selves refused to take advantage of our good

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offices, and either to quit the Work-house, or suffer the agent to apply any part of the money to his use, notwithstanding he wanted many necessaries.

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I have observed before, that by the humanity of the parish-officers, whose conduct to him does them great honour, he had many indulgencies and conveniencies not allowed in places of that description. He spent much of his time in writing, and as he continued during the winter and part of the spring in the work-house, he was invited to make use of the parlour, an indulgence I believe he never once availed himself of but remained in the small room I have mentioned, in a very severe season, until he was accomodated with a better, which became empty, and in which he could have a fire. Here it will be necessary to remark that the board never demanded or received any remuneration.

The frequent conversations which I have had with him during the period above alluded to: seemed on his part, to be strongly marked with shrewdness and propriety when the subjects were general; and enthusiastic flightiness, when religion “the master string” was touched upon.

One remark I could not help making, as the cause that gave rise to it occurred almost daily during the time I knew him. He was ever in expectation; sometimes of a lady, who was to descend from the clouds, sometimes of immense sums of money, which were, probably, to be showered upon him---sometimes of a period like that foretold by the Prophet *Isaiah*, when *turbulence* and *war* should cease, and *peace*, *love*, and *happiness*, be extended to all mankind.

Although the Utopian schemes he formed, and his visionary expectations were always disappointed, his reasons why they were so, and ærial resources for a future period, were ever ready to disperse the clouds, and point to superior advantages, which a short delay was to produce. When one scheme of reformation was found impracticable--the materials of one fabric unsubstantial---or, when one visionary being had totally receded from his view, his fertile imagination could directly supply its place with another, which appeared, vanished, and was succeeded by another, for such his creative fancy had always the power to command.

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In this way several months were passed by Mr. B. who seemed perfectly happy in his situation, never intimating the least wish to stir from the house, nor even to indulge himself with a walk in a large garden belonging to it, which had been allowed, and even recommended to him. The latter end of February 1792, he appeared to have changed his opinion with respect to seclusion, and expressed a desire to go out, which he was suffered to do several times. He then altered his mind in another respect, and informed his agents that he would settle with them, receive his money, and leave the Work-house.

As no one had the power, or wish to detain him, he was told he was at liberty to do so whenever he pleased. The agent called upon me, and desired me to witness the payment of the balance due to him, which was received by Mr. B. who immediately cancelled that gentleman's letter of attorney, and in a few days, after providing himself with some necessaries, removed to a lodging, I believe, in Compton-street, where, I understood from information not to be disputed, he took it into his head that he had the power to *restore the blind to fight!*

sight! It is not to be wondered, that the intimation of such a faculty should draw a considerable number of people, of this description, to his levee, more especially as they found, that when he touched their eyes with his fingers, he always touched their palms with a small gratuity.

The reader will probably guess what success his endeavours to "clear the visual ray" were attended with; if he does not, it is impossible for me to inform him, as some months had elapsed, in which I neither saw nor heard of Mr. B.; when one day, on which it rained incessantly, I was surprised by a visit from him. He entered the room in a dress, of which the greater part was linen, completely soaked through; and by no arguments could be persuaded either to change it, or to dry himself. He said, "he came to thank me, in the first instance, for my interference in his affairs, and, in the next, to inquire if *John Pitt* had called upon me?" I answered that, to the best of my recollection, I had not the honour to be acquainted with any person of the name of *John Pitt*. "No!" he replied, "then you will

will soon ! You have heard of *William Pitt* ?”
 “ If you mean the Chancellor of the Exchequer ; who has not ?” “ Well, then,” he continued, “ you will soon have a visit from his brother.” “ Oh ! then you mean the *Earl of Chatham*.” “ Certainly I do !” he replied ; “ but as I consider titles as the baubles of vanity, I seldom make use of them---the *Earl of Chatham*, as you call him, will soon visit you : I have wrote him a letter of *sixteen folio pages*, in which you are mentioned.”

Whether the Earl of Chatham ever received the *sixteen folio pages*, it is impossible for me to say ; nor have I since that time seen the author of them, although, as he has assumed what may be called a public character, I believe there are few but what have heard of him. To do away an opinion, which many have formed, that Mr. Brothers is an artful, designing imposter, is one of my motives for writing these pages. I believe him, *if left to follow the dictates of his own heart*, to be a man of honour, integrity, and principle. I have also observed, that, to a naturally strong, but unfortunately perverted understanding,

is

is in him joined some knowledge of books ; but attended with a total ignorance of the world : gentle, mild, and unassuming, though seemingly possessed of great sensibility ; and, although his mind is strongly biaſſed toward a particular object, he can ſcarcely be ſaid to be dogmatical, even in the height of his enthuaſm.

Such is the opinion I have formed of *Richard Brothers* : and there is ſcarcely a doubt, from the inoffenſiveness of his character, and goodness of his heart, for even his schemes, however wild, had benevolence for their motive, that when he had amused himself with writing to particular persons, endeavouring to promote univerſal peace, healing the ſick, reſtoring the blind, or becoming the theme and oracle of a diſputing ſociety ; but he would have ſunk into oblivion, had he not been made of an importance he never dreamed of, by having his wild vagaries adopted by an honourable gentleman, whoſe authority is of too much conſequence to be overlooked, and whoſe writings might give celebrity to a character much inferior to that of the Lieutenant.

I am

I am willing to think, that the gentleman alluded to is sincere; I am willing to believe, that he is convinced of the truth of the Divine Mission of the Prophet he patronizes. As I understand he has lived much in the *East*, and is deeply skilled in Oriental Learning, I have Charity enough to suppose that he has adopted the opinion that prevails in *Asia*; and that he is ready to reverence that man as a Being of superior intuition and intelligence, whom people that have no other guide than plain common sense, might think mad.

But although I acquit the author of the Testimony of any designs in that work, but such as the most rigid moralist might justify, and the most ardent lover of the constitution approve, I would ask him a few questions: Is he certain that this may be the general opinion? Has he considered what consequences might ensue, from setting the passions of the people, the tide of which is already pretty high, afloat? Has he revolved in his mind the evils that have arisen, in another country, from *infidelity*, and recollected that some nearly similar have, in our own, been owing

to *enthusiasm*? Does he not see that *Richard Brothers*, though innocent in himself, might in the hands of crafty, ambitious, and designing men, be made an instrument like those which have heretofore been used with success for disturbing the peace of society?

If Mr. H. knows all this, and I should be insane if I could doubt it---how can a gentleman, whom Providence has placed in the situation of a legislator, of a guide to mankind, answer to God, his conscience or his country, should he, by others, be accused of endeavouring to pervert those understandings he was born to illuminate? There is, ought to be, in every bosom, an attachment superior to those of party or politics. If a man should strive to demolish a beautiful building, which is not only an ornament, but an advantage to the country, because he disliked the construction of some particular *offices*, it would argue a weak head, or, what is worse, a depraved heart.

When, in the first pages of this work I gave some instances of the general effects of credulity, and some particular examples of enthusiasm, I might have added to them those

those that occurred at Munster in 1533; when *John Buckbold* ran through the streets, crying, *Repent and be baptised, or the wrath of God will fall on you*; which words were the signal of a riot that almost destroyed the city: the enormities of *Matthias*, *Kniperdoling*, and *Tuyfentschryver*, who counterfeited a revelation, that *Buckbold* was to be exalted to the Royal Dignity---to the eternal Throne of his Father *David*, whose magnificence he affected---was invested with the regalia, and assumed the title of, *The King of Justice, the King of the New Jerusalem*. I might also have quoted the effects which the prediction of *Elizabeth Barton, the holy maid of Kent*,* the works of *Hooker*, *Glanville*, and even those of the †*Royal Demonologist*, had upon the public mind; but as the Oracles have long since ceased, as Prophets have but seldom appeared, and informers against witches, forcerers, and inchanters, have been proscribed by act of ‡parliament, it would be attacking unresisting imbecility, were I to be more

* She foretold that if Henry VIII. married Ann Bullen, he should not be king a month longer.

† James the First.

‡ The 9th of Geo. the Second,

diffuse in my animadversions upon them---I shall therefore conclude, by recommending to my countrymen the advice Mr. Brothers gives his numerous visitors ; namely,

“ To search the Scriptures.”

If they pay a strict attention to the contents of the Sacred Volume, and do not suffer their judgment to be warped, and their minds to be perverted, by the nefarious arguments of wicked men, they will there find instructions, by which *they will be led into the way of truth, and taught to hold that faith, in unity of spirit, which is the bond of peace, and righteousness of life.*



